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SUBJECT: MEXICO'S LOWER HOUSE OF CONGRESS APPROVES
ANTI-TRAFFICKING BILL

¶1. (SBU) On April 26, Mexico's lower house of Congress approved a bill criminalizing trafficking in persons (TIP) at the federal level, with 396 votes in favor and one abstention. This bill is a revised version of the one unanimously passed by the Mexican Senate in December 2005. Post's contacts in the Senate as well as outside observers expect that the new bill will be easily approved by the Senate, which has been a motivating force behind the passage of a federal anti-TIP law. In addition to initiating and passing legislation more than a year ago, the Senate launched a media campaign in the summer of 2006 to promote the importance and need for a national law, broadcasting 30 second announcements on television and radio. Unfortunately, yesterday was the Senate's last day in session, and it will only reconvene for the next session in September. Unless there is a special session of Congress held this Spring or Summer, as is currently being discussed, the anti-TIP legislation is expected to be passed by the Senate and signed into law by President Calderon late in the year.

¶2. (SBU) The anti-TIP legislation punishes those who promote, solicit, offer, facilitate, obtain, transport, provide or receive - through physical or moral violence, deceit, or abuse of power - a person to be submitted to sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery or slavery-like conditions, servitude, or the removal of organs. A person convicted of trafficking could be sentenced from six to 12 years in prison, with fines up to 1,500 days of the minimum wage. If the trafficking victim is a minor or lacks the mental capacity to understand or resist the act committed, the person sentenced could receive nine to 18 years in prison and fined up to 2,250 days of the minimum wage. A public servant convicted under the legislation could receive up to 27 years in prison and a fined up to 3,300 days of the minimum wage.

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